

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

As a preliminary matter, Applicants would respectfully point out that the finality of the outstanding Office Action is improper. Claims 21-23 presented in the Amendment dated July 27, 2005 corresponded to original Claims 18-21, which the Examiner indicated to be allowable in the first Office Action. Given the Examiner's initial indication of allowable subject matter, Claims 21-23 could not properly be finally rejected. Nevertheless, Claims 21-23 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer to reduce the issues.

Claim 17 stands newly rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Nayfeh et al. (U.S.P. 6,585,947). Applicants respectfully traverse.

The present application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/153,069 filed September 10, 1999. Applicants' provisional filing date is earlier than the effective date of Nayfeh et al. (October 22, 1999), which therefore does not constitute prior art with respect to the invention of Applicants' Claim 17. Accordingly, the rejection on Nayfeh et al. should be withdrawn and Claim 17 should be allowed.

The Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter in Claims 18-20 is acknowledged with appreciation. Claims 18-20 have been retained in dependent form in view of the allowability of base Claim 17 as discussed above.

A Notice of Allowance is respectfully solicited.

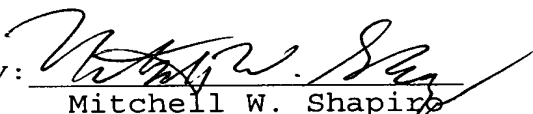
The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge to Deposit Account No. 50-1165 any fees under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 and 1.17 that may be required by this paper and to credit any overpayment to that Account. If any extension of time is required in connection with the filing of this paper and has not been requested separately, such extension is hereby requested.

Respectfully submitted,

MWS:kss

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